

BOARD BRIEF

Date: December 15, 2023

BOARD INFORMATION: X

MEETING PREPARATION:

FROM: Alexander Duncan, Executive Principal, Alexandria City High School
Ashley Carter Sinclair, Campus Administrator, King Street Campus
Lance Harrell, Campus Administrator, Minnie Howard Campus
Fredericka Smith, Campus Administrator, Satellite and Chance For Change Campuses

THROUGH: Pierrette Finney, Ed.D., Chief of Teaching, Learning, and Leadership
Rene Paschal, Acting Executive Director of School Leadership
Melanie Kay-Wyatt, Ed.D., Superintendent of Schools

TO: The Honorable Michelle Rief, Ph.D. Chair, and
Members of the Alexandria City School Board

TOPIC: Alexandria City High School WIDA ACCESS Plan

ACPS 2025 STRATEGIC PLAN GOAL:

Goal 2: Instructional Excellence
Goal 3: Student Accessibility and Support
Goal 5: Family and Community Engagement

SY 2023-2024 PRIORITY AREA:

Academic Achievement
Student Supports
Staff Supports

SUMMARY:

This brief updates the ACPS School Board on the high school's plan to administer the WIDA *ACCESS* to its English learner (EL) students. This plan is similar to the plan that was implemented during the 2022-2023 school year.

DETAILS:

In previous years, the ACHS testing team would pull EL students out of class over the 8-10 week testing window to complete the WIDA Access for ELLs test, a federally mandated English proficiency test required for all EL students. There are four sections of the assessment: Listening, Speaking, Reading, and Writing. Pulling students from classes over the course of the testing window period to ensure each of the domains was completed resulted in some incomplete sections in addition to extended disruptions to instructional time.

In February 2023, the ACHS Titan Testing Team will implement a new testing approach for WIDA Access for ELs. This approach includes:

- A two-day concentrated testing period for EL students in grades 9-12: February 6th and 7th.
- A make-up window to test any EL students who were absent on February 6th or 7th.
- Testing is to occur at the King Street and Minnie Howard campuses for all EL students in grades 9-12.
- Non-testing students at the King Street and Minnie Howard campuses would remain asynchronous for these two days.
- Non-testing students at Satellite Campus and Chance for Change Campus should report in person for instruction.

This approach has the following benefits:

- Reduction in missed instructional time for our EL students and our staff overall.
- Increased equity with all other testing that requires alternate schedules. These alternate schedules usually do not touch as many students as the WIDA Access for ELs.
- Responsive plan for our participation rate plan to reach 95%, as mandated by the VDOE.
- A longer window for absent students to make up the assessment.
- Increased staff training on WIDA ACCESS and all of its components.
- Reduction in school-wide effort “days” to complete WIDA, which conflicts with our ability to get substitutes.
- Provides a high-quality testing environment.
- Planning, collaborative meetings, and professional development can take place after testing concludes.

The ACHS Executive Principal will communicate this plan of testing and schedule adjustments to the student population as well as parents/guardians through ParentSquare.

RECOMMENDATION:

The Superintendent recommends that the ACPS School Board review the information in this brief to familiarize themselves with the high school plan for administering the WIDA ACCESS for ELLs.

IMPACT:

This approach to administering the WIDA ACCESS for ELLs will allow the high school to provide the most appropriate assessment environment for our students, resulting in increased investment in the assessment as well as increased participation rates and maximum opportunities for absent students to make up the assessments which will result in a reduction in missed instructional time for our EL students.

ATTACHMENTS:

None

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